Project title

Explore how to effectively incorporate multiple Greenest City Action Plan strategies which increase our connections to nature in the city into the design of characteristic urban landscapes.

Greenest City goal(s) supported

GCAP: Access to Nature
Green Operations Plan: Biodiversity
Park Board Strategic Plan: Goal 4 (Healthy Ecosystems) - grow green neighborhoods by providing our communities with easy access to nature

Project context, scope, and value to City

The GCAP has identified access to nature as an important goal and has spawned a series of strategies that seek to achieve this goal. The primary ones are the Biodiversity Strategy, the Bird Friendly Strategy and the Urban Forest Strategy but it also encompasses other initiatives such as implementation of Climate Adaptation, Stormwater ISMP and Food Policy. These strategies all intersect on the ground in how parks and open spaces are designed and managed. They all call for physical changes in the natural and more domesticated urban landscape to accomplish their goals. These strategies will all affect how new park space in under-represented neighbourhoods will be designed and how new tree planting across the city can be used to meet a wide number of Greenest City goals. They will also provide guidance for the redesign or rehabilitation of existing parks and other urban landscapes. More specific information is needed to identify which park and/or landscape features best provide the experience of nature within the city and visualizations are required to convey their potential.

The scholar will research the landscape design implications for the various Greenest City strategies. For example, how do the landscape design guidelines for increasing habitat for urban songbirds and other wildlife help us achieve our tree planting targets or contribute to urban food production? The scholar will then produce designs and illustrations of the intersection of these strategies to provide visualizations to designers, City staff, other agencies such as the Vancouver School Board and the general public for them to better understand the implications in the landscape of these strategies and to promote their implementation. Demonstration sites will be selected based on representativeness of conditions in Vancouver. They should be especially important in promoting Greenest City objectives within Park Board and Engineering operations staff (planting and maintenance) to increase habitat values in our parks and along our streets and other urban landscapes.

The scholar will use several methods:

Review strategies approved or under development which tie into the goal of providing increased access to nature.

Review innovative practices from other cities that may help inform the promotion of Greenest City objectives in Vancouver.

Identify and review local examples through discussions with staff, stewardship groups and other Lower Mainland municipalities.

Develop a series of designs and visualizations for a representative sampling of urban landscape types (primarily neighbourhood parks, small public open spaces and streetscapes and select private landscapes, such as traditional residential). These would be used to illustrate the intersection of the various strategies (as listed above), incorporating directions from them and other sources, such as the songbird guidelines developed for the River District in Vancouver or the ecological integrity Best Management Practices developed by the Stanley Park Ecology Society.

Ensure the designs and visualizations are formatted so they can be used for stakeholder engagement processes by City staff as well as partner groups who work with the City in increasing access to nature in the Vancouver. If time allows, package designs and visualizations into discrete promotional packages for specific target audiences.

Deliverables

- Summary of characteristics, outcomes and other relevant factors common to the Greenest City Access to Nature strategies, adopted or under development.
- A series of designs and visualizations of a wide range of scenarios (primarily of neighbourhood parks, small public open spaces and streetscapes and select private landscapes, such as traditional residential) that can be used to promote understanding of and the implementation of the strategies.
- Summary of lessons learned and recommendations based on the application of GCAP strategies to park and public open space design to landscape design on private property.
- Designs and visualizations formatted and packaged for stakeholder engagement, time permitting.

Mentor department

Park Board

Candidate skill set/background

- Excellent research and writing skills.
- Demonstrated landscape design and graphic design skills.
- Experience in conducting or an awareness of stakeholder engagement would be useful.